

Miami • Miami Beach Transportation Corridor Study
Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement

Scoping Document

October 2001

Prepared for:



**Miami-Dade Metropolitan
Planning Organization**

**MIAMI-MIAMI BEACH TRANSPORTATION CORRIDOR
STUDY
SUPPLEMENTAL DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT
STATEMENT
MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA**

SCOPING DOCUMENT

October 2001

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The preparation of this report has been financed in part through a joint participation agreement between the Miami-Dade Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT).

The contents of this document reflect the views of the MPO, which is responsible for the facts and the accuracy of the data presented herein. The contents do not necessarily reflect the official views or policy of the US Department of Transportation or the Federal Transit Administration. This document does not constitute a standard, specification or regulation.

This report has been prepared in cooperation with:
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The City of Miami
The City of Miami Beach
Florida Department of Transportation
United States Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration
Federal Transit Administration

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	PROJECT INFORMATION.....	1
1.1	WHAT IS THIS PROJECT?.....	1
1.2	WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS PROJECT?	1
1.3	WHICH FEDERAL AGENCIES ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE PROJECT?	5
1.4	HOW CAN YOU GET IN TOUCH WITH THE LOCAL PROJECT SPONSOR?.....	6
1.5	WHERE IS THE STUDY CORRIDOR LOCATED?	6
1.6	WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS SCOPING DOCUMENT?	6
2.	BACKGROUND.....	8
2.1	WHY IS THERE A NEED FOR THE STUDY?	8
2.2	WHAT OTHER STUDIES HAVE BEEN CONDUCTED?.....	9
2.2.1	Miami Beach Light Rail Feasibility Study	9
2.2.2	Transit Corridors Transitional Analysis.....	9
2.2.3	East-West Multimodal Corridor DEIS	9
2.3	WHAT OTHER RELATED PROJECTS ARE UNDERWAY?	10
2.3.1	Miami Intermodal Center (MIC)	10
2.3.2	MIC-MIA Connector	12
2.3.3	MIC-Earlington Heights Connector	12
2.4	DESCRIPTION OF THE TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES, SERVICES AND CONDITIONS IN THE STUDY AREA.....	13
2.4.1	Roadways	13
2.4.2	Transit Services	16
3.	PROJECT DEVELOPMENT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (EIS) PROCESS.....	21
3.1	WHAT IS AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (EIS)?.....	21
3.2	WHAT IS A "SUPPLEMENT"	23
3.3	WHAT IS AN "ALTERNATIVE"?	23
3.4	WHAT ALTERNATIVES ARE BEING CONSIDERED?.....	23
3.5	WHAT KINDS OF THINGS WILL BE STUDIED?	24
3.6	HOW CAN THE GENERAL PUBLIC GET INVOLVED IN THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS?.....	25
3.7	HOW CAN I LEARN MORE ABOUT THE STUDY?	26
4.	THE SCOPING PROCESS AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT	27
4.1	WHAT IS "SCOPING"?	27
4.2	HOW CAN I PARTICIPATE IN SCOPING?.....	27
4.3	WHAT OTHER INVOLVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES WILL I HAVE?	28

5.	GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY.....	30
5.1	WHAT ARE THE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR THIS STUDY?	30
6.	INITIAL ALTERNATIVES UNDER CONSIDERATION.....	31
6.1	PREVIOUSLY PROPOSED MIAMI-MIAMI BEACH LRT ALTERNATIVES.....	31
6.1.1	CBD Tunnel Option.....	31
6.1.2	Miami Beach Loop Option.....	31
6.2	NO-BUILD (NO-PROJECT) ALTERNATIVE	32
6.3	BASELINE ALTERNATIVE	32
6.4	MIAMI-MIAMI BEACH TRANSPORTATION CORRIDOR ALTERNATIVES.....	32
6.5	VEHICLE TECHNOLOGIES.....	32
6.5.1	Local/Priority Bus Service.....	33
6.5.2	Light Rail Transit (LRT)	39
7.	THE NEXT STEP	41

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. SR 836 Multimodal Corridor Alternatives	3
Figure 2. Project Location and Study Area	4
Figure 3. Sectional Perspective of MIC Core - Looking East	12
Figure 4. MIC-MIA APM Connector	13
Figure 5. MIC-Earlington Heights Connector	15
Figure 6. Metrorail Vehicle and Route Map	17
Figure 7. Metromover Vehicle	18
Figure 8. Electric Wave Route Map	20
Figure 9. FTA Project Development Chart	22
Figure 10. East-West Multimodal Corridor DEIS Alternatives	34
Figure 11. Miami – Miami Beach Transportation Corridor Study Initial Alternatives.....	35
Figure 12. Advanced Bus	38
Figure 13. Advanced Light Rail Transit	40

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. MDT Bus Routes in Study Area	18
Table 2. Scoping Meeting Schedule	25
Table 3. Public Involvement Program Coordinators	26
Table 4. Goals and Objectives	30

1. Project Information

1.1 What is this Project?

On October 10, 1995, the East-West Multimodal Corridor Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) was executed by the Division Administrator of the Federal Highway Administration. The DEIS was subsequently advertised and carried through the public hearing process in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended.

The East-West Multimodal Corridor DEIS evaluated the following alternatives: a no-build alternative; a transportation system management alternative; an elevated expressway alternative; a Metrorail via Earlington Heights alternative; four SR 836 alternatives with thirteen options; and the Flagler Street alternative. All of these transit alternatives included a light rail connection between Biscayne Boulevard in downtown Miami and south Miami Beach. The alternatives evaluated are reflected in Figure 1.

This project, the Miami-Miami Beach Transportation Corridor Study, is a re-evaluation of the alternatives analysis and a supplement as necessary of the Miami-Miami Beach segment of the 1995 DEIS prepared for the East-West Multimodal Corridor.

1.2 What is the purpose of this Project?

Both downtown Miami and south Miami Beach are continuing to grow rapidly and are experiencing heavy densification that has exceeded the 2020 projections in a number of locations in the Study Area (Figure 2). This growth, when combined with the relatively narrow streets and a chronic lack of parking, results in extreme local street congestion making access by private automobile extremely difficult. The downtown development plans for both Miami and south Miami Beach recognize the need for a public transit investment that is supportive of their land use plans and able to accommodate the projected future growth and the economic vitality of the Study Area.

Currently, the primary transportation facility connecting the Miami central Business District and south Miami Beach is the MacArthur Causeway, which is a six-lane arterial built on fill across Biscayne Bay. The developments approved or underway for Watson Island including Parrot Jungle, a marina, hotel complex and the future Port of Miami tunnel connection will significantly increase the congestion on the facility and enhance the need for additional connectivity between the activity centers. Public transit provides a feasible way to increase the people moving capacity of the facility to relieve existing and future congestion without significantly impacting Biscayne Bay.

The purpose of the Miami-Miami Beach Transportation Corridor Study is to advance the definition of the public transit connection between these two regional economic engines that is generally responsive to the needs highlighted above and that enhances regional and local mobility by completing the connection to existing and

planned transportation facilities. A direct connection from the Metrorail, Metromover and the bus terminal facility in downtown Miami to south Miami Beach will

Figure 1. SR 836 Multimodal Corridor Alternatives

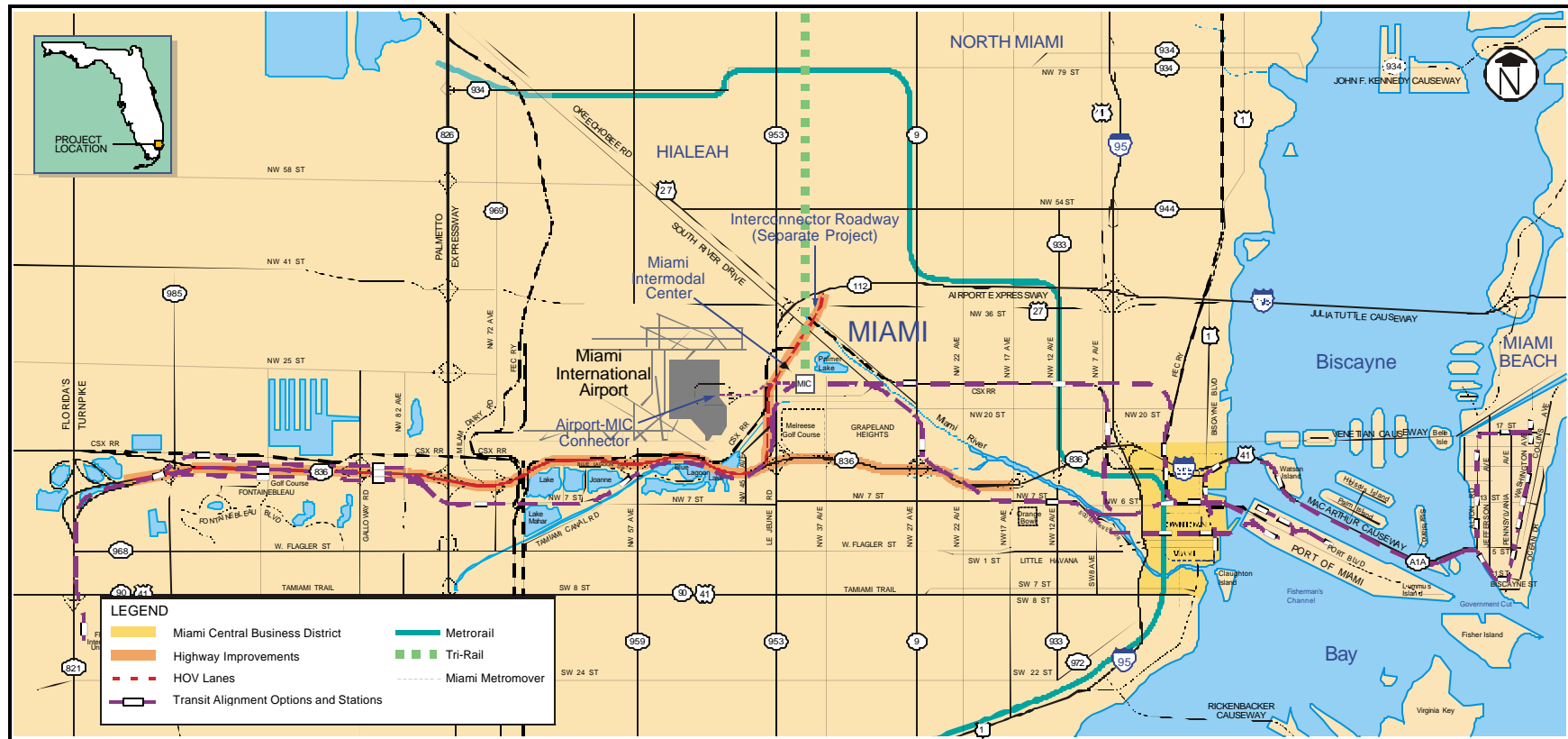


Figure 2. Project Location and Study Area



offer a much improved travel option to area residents, employees and tourists/visitors as well as access to and from the greater south Florida region. The East-West Multimodal Corridor DEIS examined a number of transportation options connecting the Florida International University Campus, the Miami International Airport, the Miami Central Business District, the Port of Miami, and south Miami Beach. It is the segment from Miami to Miami Beach, referred to as the Miami-Miami Beach Transportation Corridor, that is the focus of this study. The DEIS alternatives, which form the basis of, and are now being re-evaluated under the Miami-Miami Beach Transportation Corridor Study, are described further in Section 6.0.

The federal government requires the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) if a region is to receive federal funds to build major transportation capital improvements. In the East-West Multimodal Corridor DEIS, a light rail transit line between Miami Beach and downtown Miami was proposed. A short segment of the East-West Multimodal Corridor, which extended from the Palmetto Expressway to the Port of Miami, was selected for further evaluation in the Final EIS (FEIS). However, the segment from downtown Miami to Miami Beach was not included in the FEIS.

Since the proposed Miami-Miami Beach Transportation Corridor Study project will require federal funding for construction and implementation, the project must meet federal and state transportation and environmental standards. The supplemental DEIS is designed to achieve the following objectives:

- To update the existing East-West Multimodal Corridor DEIS and to document any changes that have occurred since it was originally signed.
- To provide screening and analysis of any new alternative connections to Metrorail and the Metromover in downtown Miami or to the Miami Beach Convention Center.
- Provide a basis for the selection of a locally preferred alternative (LPA) for a transit connection between downtown Miami and south Miami Beach.
- To identify the environmental permits that will be required for construction of the system.

The work will be consistent with US Department of Transportation (DOT), Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) guidelines, as well as other applicable federal and Florida State statutes and regulations.

1.3 Which Federal Agencies are responsible for the Project?

The federal agencies that are responsible for the project are:

US Department of Transportation 400 7th Street SW Suite 9400 Washington, D.C. 20590	US Department of Transportation, Region IV Federal Transit Administration 61 Forsyth Street SW Suite 17T50 Atlanta, Georgia 30303-3104	Federal Highway Administration 227 Bronough Street Tallahassee, Florida 32301
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1.4 How Can You Get in Touch with the Local Project Sponsor?

You may telephone or write to:

Miami-Dade Metropolitan Planning Organization
Mr. Wilson Fernandez
111 NW First Street, Suite 910
Miami, FL 33128
Telephone: 305.375.4507
E-mail: wilson@miamidade.gov

1.5 Where is the Study Corridor Located?

The study area is located in eastern Miami-Dade County. On the Miami side, the study limits are bounded by NW 20th Street to the north, the Miami River to the south, and I-95 to the west. On the Miami Beach side, the study limits are bounded by W 41st Street on the north, Government Cut on the south and the Atlantic Ocean to the east (Figure 2). The proposed transit corridor extends from a connection to the existing Stage 1 Metrorail line in downtown Miami across the MacArthur Causeway to the Miami Beach Convention Center.

1.6 What is the Purpose of this Scoping Document?

The purpose of this document is to notify the public of the proposed project, and to insure that:

- The public and affected agencies are involved in setting the direction of the study including the determination of which alternatives, issues and impacts are to be studied;
- All reasonable alternatives and potentially significant impacts are known and examined from the beginning of the analysis;
- Insignificant issues are addressed and eliminated early in the process; and
- The roles of the agencies are understood

This *Scoping Document* is being circulated with the objective of stimulating public discussion and soliciting public participation in the selection of the locally preferred alternative.

2. Background

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) completed a DEIS process for possible transit improvements from the FIU Campus to Miami International Airport and onto downtown Miami, the Port of Miami, and to the Miami Beach Convention Center. A locally preferred alternative was selected and a minimum operable segment (MOS) was adopted by the MPO. An FEIS was prepared for the transit MOS, which proposed a Metrorail type of system from the Palmetto Expressway and the Port of Miami.

Due to the region's failure to secure a dedicated source (i.e., penny sales tax) of funding for the project, the region was unable to identify the local match capital funding or ability to fund related operations and maintenance cost. Consequently, the project was placed on hold.

As reflected in Section 1.2, the need for a connection between Miami and Miami Beach has grown substantially. While not included in the initial or previous locally preferred alternative (LPA), the Miami-Miami Beach Transportation Corridor was evaluated as part of the East-West Multimodal Corridor Study. This study will update the technical base for the corridor, build a consensus for selection of a LPA, define a viable financial plan and perform the environmental evaluation necessary to gain environmental clearance for the project.

The LPA will then be the focus of the Preliminary Engineering and Final Environmental Impact Statement (PE/FEIS) as this less costly project is advanced through the FTA's project development process. The needed connections and extensions will be considered, and not precluded, by this project and addressed at some future time.

The analysis of all alternatives in this study is being conducted in accordance with the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) enacted on June 9, 1998. Preparation of the supplement of the DEIS will provide the documentation needed to satisfy the NEPA federal requirements.

2.1 Why is There a Need for the Study?

Steady growth in South Florida in recent years has led to increasingly congested streets and highways in Miami-Dade County. Heavy congestion is especially significant for trips destined to Miami Beach and for trips between downtown Miami and Miami Beach. This traffic congestion will steadily worsen as the streets and highways of Miami-Dade County surpass their carrying capacity not just during peak periods but also throughout the day. Based on this traffic condition, there is a need to provide an alternative transportation mode between downtown Miami and the Beach that offers convenient, reliable, rapid and safe travel in place of the automobile.

In addition, Miami-Dade County has been identified as an air quality maintenance area for ozone. Future air quality compliance will require the county to seek

alternative transportation methods in order to reduce the impacts caused by increasing vehicular traffic.

2.2 What Other Studies Have Been Conducted?

Due to the critical nature of the Miami-Miami Beach Transportation Corridor, it has been the subject of a number of studies. Summaries of the three most significant are provided below.

2.2.1 Miami Beach Light Rail Feasibility Study

In 1988 this study was conducted to determine the feasibility of constructing a light rail transit (LRT) line connecting downtown Miami to Miami Beach via the MacArthur Causeway. The proposed line was an 8.6-mile link from the Metromover station at Bayside/Omni to the Convention Center then on to NW 63rd Street. One of the goals of the project was to support the revitalization efforts of the South Beach area. The study concluded such a proposal was indeed feasible.

2.2.2 Transit Corridors Transitional Analysis

In the Year 2010 Metro-Dade Transportation Plan, six major corridors¹ were identified as "Priority Transit Corridors" within Miami-Dade County. A preliminary evaluation of costs, impacts and ridership was conducted for each corridor and the results were presented in the *"Transit Corridors Transitional Analysis"* completed by the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) in 1993. The studies performed under the *Transit Corridors Transitional Analysis* served to satisfy a portion of Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration requirements for System Planning, which is the first step in the federal capital investment project development process.

These planning documents provided the technical basis for the selection of the SR 836 Corridor, including the Miami Beach segment, as one of the corridors possessing the greatest need for transportation improvements.

2.2.3 East-West Multimodal Corridor DEIS

The *East-West Multimodal Corridor DEIS* addressed possible solutions to extreme congestion along the State Road (SR) 836 expressway, which is considered to be the most heavily traveled east-west arterial in Miami-Dade County.

Potential solutions included a transit rail line that would extend from Florida International University in the west to the Port of Miami and Miami Beach in the east.

¹ These included: North Corridor; West and Beach Corridors (combined and evaluated in the MIS/FEIS for the East-West SR 836 Multimodal Corridor Study); Northeast Corridor; Kendall Corridor; and the South Corridor (operated in conjunction with Stage 1 Metrorail, and built by FDOT as the South Dixie Busway).

The DEIS rail alternatives included a light rail transit (LRT) connection between downtown Miami and the Miami Beach Convention Center. The LPA included: two buffer separated HOV lanes, local bus improvements, freeway improvements to SR 836, a heavy rail transit line from FIU in the West to the Port of Miami in the East, and a LRT line from downtown Miami to the Miami Beach Convention Center. First phase of the LPA was selected for analysis in the FEIS, which included the segment between the Palmetto Expressway and the Port of Miami. The FEIS included the transit line, HOV lanes and highway improvements, but did not include the Miami-Miami Beach LRT segment or the heavy rail line segment, west of the Palmetto Expressway.

The *East-West Multimodal Corridor Final Environmental Impact Statement* was approved and the project received a Record of Decision for the LPA in September 1998, at which time FDOT turned the project over to MDT.

2.3 What other related projects are underway?

The heavy volume of traffic bound for Miami CBD and to the commercial/recreational areas of Miami Beach has led to increased congestion on the highways in the eastern half of Miami-Dade County. Even with the roadway improvements identified in Miami-Dade County's Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) for the area, the roadway system is expected to continue to become increasingly saturated. To ease congestion in the area, three major independent but related transportation projects have been identified for implementation.

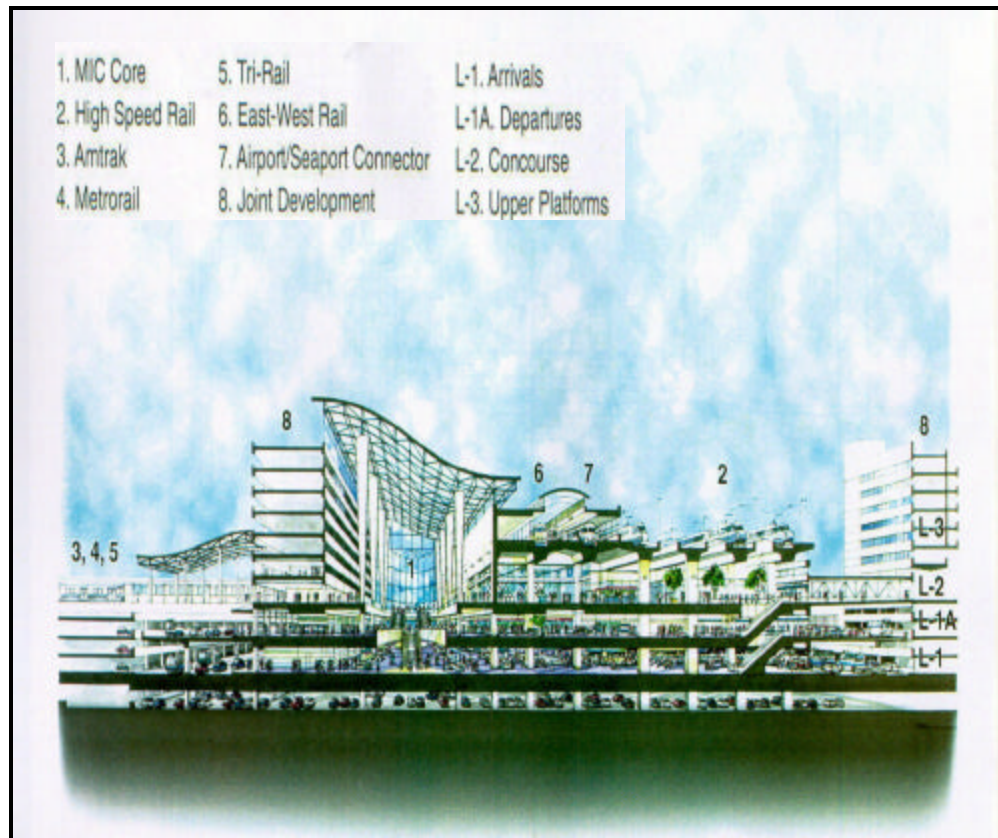
2.3.1 Miami Intermodal Center (MIC)

Though Miami-Dade County is served by several local, regional, and intercity transportation modes (including bus and rail lines), no central intermodal transfer facility exists to provide easy connections to the various systems. Besides Metrobus, which offers direct but infrequent access to the Miami International Airport (MIA) passenger terminal area, no other transportation service has direct access to MIA. However, in May 1999, Tri-Rail opened a terminus station within the boundaries of the proposed MIC site, where shuttle bus service is provided to and from the airport.

The MIC, which is being developed by FDOT, is in the engineering and design phase and is expected to be completed in 2006. The MIC is intended to serve as a central transfer point for a variety of transportation modes and at the same time restrict access to the airport terminal curbside for all vehicles other than private automobiles and taxis. The main focus of the MIC is to incorporate extensions of existing rail transit and commuter rail (including Amtrak, Tri-Rail, and Metrorail), as well as additional Metrobus service, and to consolidate rental car agencies, courtesy vans, limousines, and other similar services into one facility (Figure 3). It will also include accommodations for the existing and future Airport/Seaport transit connections. In addition, the MIC will become an extension of various airport landside terminal functions, providing airline ticketing, as well as baggage check-in and claim services.

The MIC will be connected to the airport terminals with an automated fixed guideway transport system, designated as the "MIC/MIA Connector" (see Section 2.3.2). Finally, other major related improvements associated with the MIC include new roadways connecting to SR 112 and SR 836, bus bays, and additional automobile parking. Conceptual design and planning activities are currently underway for the MIC, which will be located east of LeJeune Road and north of NW 21st Street.

Figure 3. Sectional Perspective of MIC Core - Looking East



2.3.2 MIC-MIA Connector

As mentioned above, the MIC-MIA Connector will provide the principal access between the airport terminals and the MIC. The MIC-MIA Connector is approximately 1-mile long and is being developed by the Miami-Dade Aviation Department and is scheduled to be completed in 2006. It will consist of a fixed-guideway Automated People Mover (APM) system linking the airport to the MIC (Figure 4). The APM system will shuttle passengers and visitors between Airport terminal areas and the MIC, including its intermodal facilities and other associated commercial development.

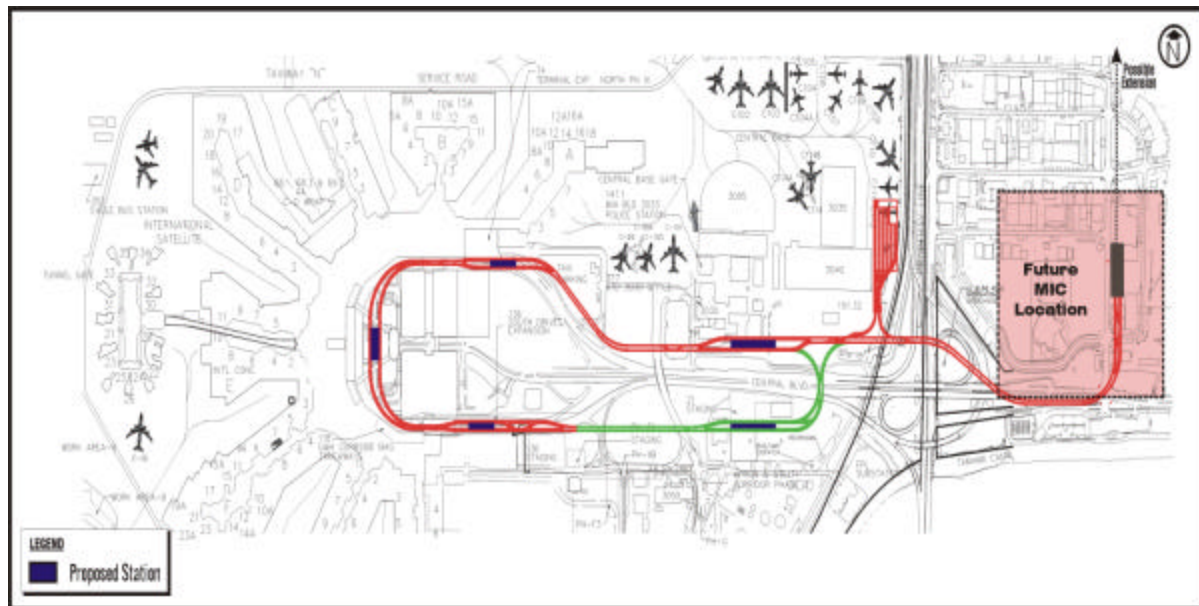
Although still in the early design phase, the APM operations and technology eventually selected will likely be similar to Miami-Dade Transit's (MDT) downtown Metromover system and to the airport's existing passenger tram shuttle between the main terminal and the satellite terminal on Concourse E.

2.3.3 MIC-Earlington Heights Connector

The Miami-Dade Transit (MDT) is currently conducting the MIC-Earlington Heights Connector DEIS Study to investigate the provisions for a public transit connection from the existing Metrorail system to the Miami International Airport via the MIC. The alternatives to extend the elevated Metrorail system from the existing Earlington

Heights station to the MIC include three potential alignments (Figure 5) along NW 27th Avenue, NW 32nd Avenue, and the South Florida Rail Corridor. If approved, the 2.5-mile long system could be expected to be operational by 2007.

Figure 4. MIC-MIA APM Connector



2.4 Description of the Transportation Facilities, Services and Conditions in the Study Area

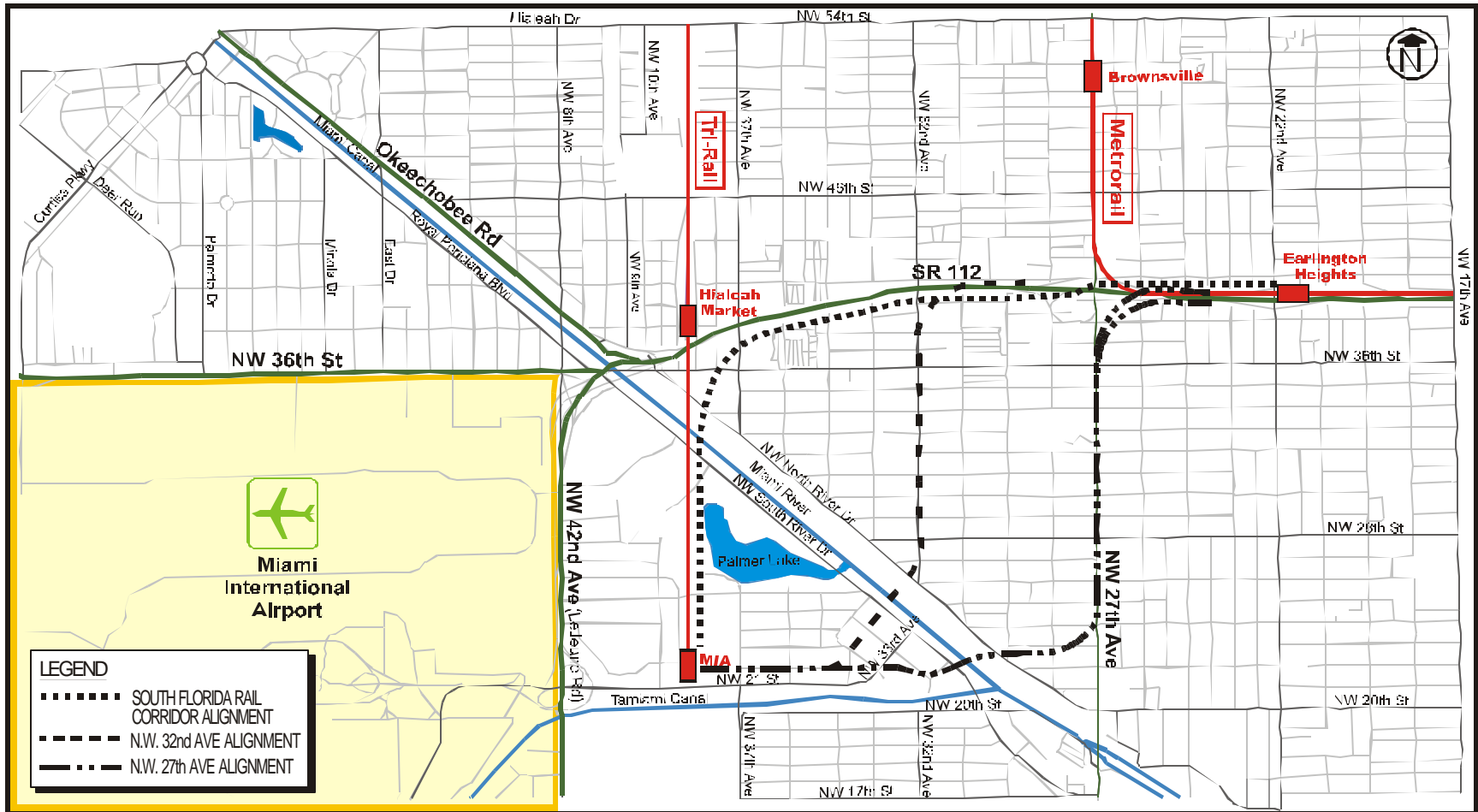
The study area is located in the easternmost section of central Miami-Dade County and encompasses the municipalities of the City of Miami and Miami Beach. The study area extends from downtown Miami to the eastern edge of Miami Beach. The east-west study limits are bounded by I-95 and the Atlantic Ocean. The Miami Beach north-south project limits are W 41st Street and Government Cut, while NW 20th Street and the Miami River mark the north-south project limits for the City of Miami.

2.4.1 Roadways

Biscayne Boulevard is a major arterial that is located in eastern downtown Miami, and carries two-way traffic in a north-south direction. This facility has six lanes, protected turn lanes, and is divided by a raised median. Parking facilities are situated in the median of the roadway. The MacArthur Causeway crosses Biscayne Bay on fill and is identified as a principal arterial that generally runs in an east-west direction. The causeway accommodates two-way traffic and is typically access controlled with a divided raised curb.

Alton Road (located on the western edge of Miami Beach) is identified as a four-lane minor arterial. It is an undivided roadway with two-way traffic operating in a north-south direction.

Figure 5. MIC-Earlinton Heights Connector



Washington Avenue (located toward the eastern side of Miami Beach) is identified as a two-way collector street that operates in a north-south direction. Some sections of the roadway are divided with a raised curb or separated by painted turn lanes.

Collins Avenue, also designated as A1A, is located on the eastern edge of Miami Beach and is identified as a Principal Arterial. Within the study area, it is an undivided two-lane roadway with two-way operations in a north-south direction.

2.4.2 Transit Services

Both the City of Miami Beach and MDT operate regularly scheduled transit service within the study area, including Metrorail, Metromover, Metrobus, and the Electrowave Shuttle, all of which are described in the following sections.

2.4.2.1 Metrorail

Metrorail (Figure 6) is an elevated heavy rail system that runs from south Miami-Dade County, through downtown Miami, to the City of Hialeah. The Metrorail trains currently operate at six-minute headways during peak hours and on 15 to 20-minute headways during off-peak hours. Two existing stations located in downtown Miami, Overtown and Government Center, are potential locations for the line from Miami Beach to interconnect.

2.4.2.2 Metromover

Metromover (Figure 7) is the Automated People Mover (APM) System in downtown Miami, which operates in three loops – an inner loop and the Brickell and Omni loops. The inner loop serves central downtown Miami and the outer loop alternately serves Brickell and the Omni areas. It is a 4.4-mile system with 21 stations. It operates from 5:30 AM to midnight with 90 second combined headways during the peak periods and 3 to 5 minutes combined headways during the off-peak periods. The Metromover system could potentially have several interface stations with the Miami-Miami Beach Project.

2.4.2.3 Metrobus

The majority of the MDT bus routes operate through the study area, following the grid system of the road network. Many of the routes feed into transit hubs in downtown Miami. There are two transit hubs in the downtown Miami area – the Omni Bus Terminal and the Downtown Terminal at NW 1st Avenue and West Flagler Street. Table 1 provides a summary of the routes that operate in the corridor.

Figure 6. Metrorail Vehicle and Route Map

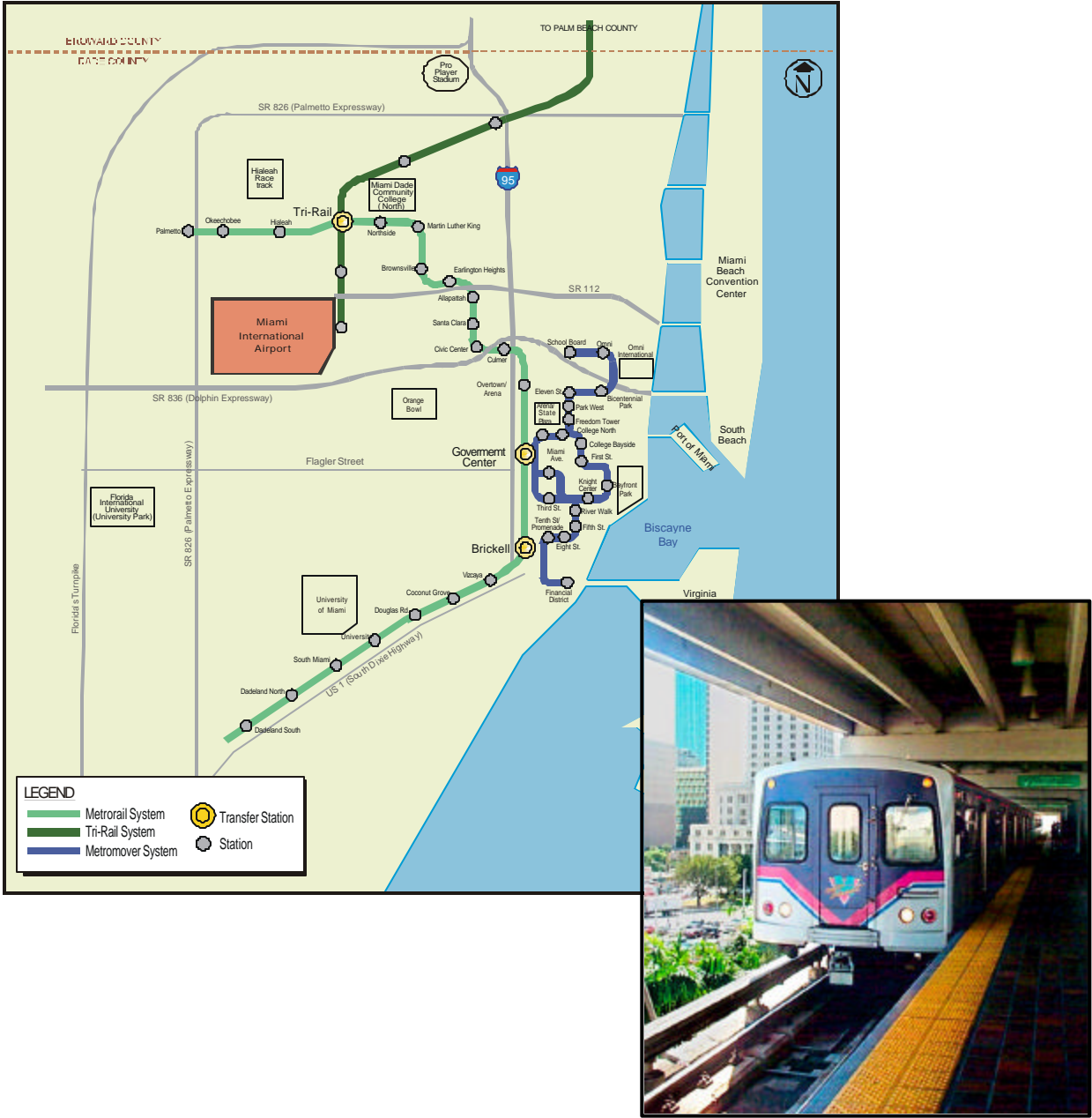


Figure 7. Metromover Vehicle



Table 1. MDT Bus Routes in Study Area

Route #	Frequency	Connects
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15 min. during peak hours • 20 min. off-peak hours 	163rd Street Mall to downtown bus terminal
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 min. during peak hours • 45 min. during off- peak 	Aventura to downtown bus terminal
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hourly 	South Bayshore Drive to downtown Metromover
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 min. during peak hours • 30 min. off-peak 	Sweetwater to Overtown Station
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15 min. during peak hours • 10 min. off-peak 	FIU to Government Center Station
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 min. during peak hours • 20 min. off-peak 	Aventura to downtown bus terminal
10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 40 min. during peak hours • 30 min. off-peak 	North Miami Beach to downtown bus terminal
11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7 min. during peak hours • 15 min. during off peak 	FIU to Government Center station
16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 min. during peak hours • 30 min. off-peak hours 	North Miami Beach to downtown bus terminal
21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30 min. all day 	Opa-locka to downtown bus terminal
24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30 min. all day 	SW 137th Avenue to Government Center Station
27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15 min. all day 	NW 27th Avenue to Coconut Grove

Route #	Frequency	Connects
32	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 min during peak hours • 30 min during off-peak hours 	St. Thomas University to Omni bus terminal
36	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15 min during peak hours • 30 min. during off- peak hours 	Koger Office Park to Omni bus terminal
42	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hourly 	LeJeune Road to MIA
48	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hourly 	South Miami to Mercy Hospital to Omni International Mall
77	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 min. during peak hours • 15 min off-peak 	Golden Glades to downtown bus terminal
95X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 min. during peak period 	Golden Glades to downtown Miami
A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 min. all day 	Lincoln Road to Omni bus terminal
B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30 min. all day 	Key Biscayne to Government Center station
C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 min during peak hours • 30 min during off-peak hours 	Mt. Sinai Hospital to downtown bus terminal
H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 min during peak hours • 30 min during off-peak hours 	Bal Harbor to South Beach
J	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 min. during peak hours • 30 min. during off- peak hours 	NW 36th Street to MIA to Miami Beach
K	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 min during peak hours • 30 min during off-peak hours 	Omni bus terminal to Haulover marina to Diplomat Mall (Broward County)
L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 min. all day 	Hialeah Metrorail Station to Collins Avenue to Meridian Avenue
M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30 min. all day 	Civic Center Station to Omni bus terminal to Mt. Sinai Hospital
R	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hourly 	Mt. Sinai Hospital to South Beach
S	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 min. all day 	Aventura to Miami Beach to downtown bus terminal
T	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30 min. all day 	Haulover Marina to downtown bus terminal
W	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 24 min. all day 	South Beach to Miami Beach Convention Center
Biscayne Max	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15 min. during peak periods 	Downtown Miami to Omni Metromover Station to Aventura Mall
Flagler Max	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15 min. during peak periods 	Flagler Street to Government Center Station to Convention Center
Seaport Connection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15 min. weekdays • 30 min. weekends 	Downtown Miami (Government Center) to Seaport Terminal

2.4.2.4 Electrowave Shuttle



The City of Miami Beach Electrowave shuttle service began operating in January 1998 with seven (7) all electric 22-foot, 30-passenger shuttle buses. The fleet now includes eleven (11) electric shuttle buses and has transported over 3.5 million passengers within the last four years. The zero emissions electric shuttles system is the first alternatively fueled transit service in Florida.

Figure 8. Electric Wave Route Map

The Electrowave shuttle operates along two interconnected loops serving Washington and Collins Avenues. The Electrowave shuttle route (Figure 8) serves forty-six (46) stops within two interconnected loops along Washington and Collins Avenues. The shuttle service operates from 8 AM until 2 AM on Mondays through Wednesdays, 8 AM to 4 AM on Thursdays through Saturdays, and 10 AM to 2 AM on Sundays and holidays.

The Washington Avenue route runs north-south along Washington Avenue between W 17th Street and South Pointe Drive. The Collins Avenue circular route runs between W 16th Street and W 23rd Street along Collins Avenue and Washington Avenue.



3. Project Development Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) Process

The project development process used for the Miami-Miami Beach Transportation Corridor Study project will follow the joint FHWA/FTA Final Rules on Statewide and Metropolitan Planning published in the Federal Register on June 9, 1998. The FTA project development process is reflected in Figure 9. These new standardized guidelines reflect the directives of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) and comply with other related federal and state laws, rules, and regulations. Several reports will be produced during the study including this Scoping Document, a supplement of the Draft EIS (DEIS), a Preferred Alternative Report, and a Final EIS (FEIS).

The Miami-Miami Beach Transportation Corridor Study DEIS will be managed by the MPO, with participation by the Cities of Miami and Miami Beach and other agencies. The technical work will be conducted by a team of consulting planners and engineers led by the firm of Parsons Brinckerhoff Quade & Douglas, Inc. (PBQ&D).

A Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) will be established during the first phase of the study. This committee, consisting of representatives of local organizations and local elected officials, will function during both the Draft and Final EIS phases of the study. It will provide one of several mechanisms for public input as part of the Study's Public Involvement Program.

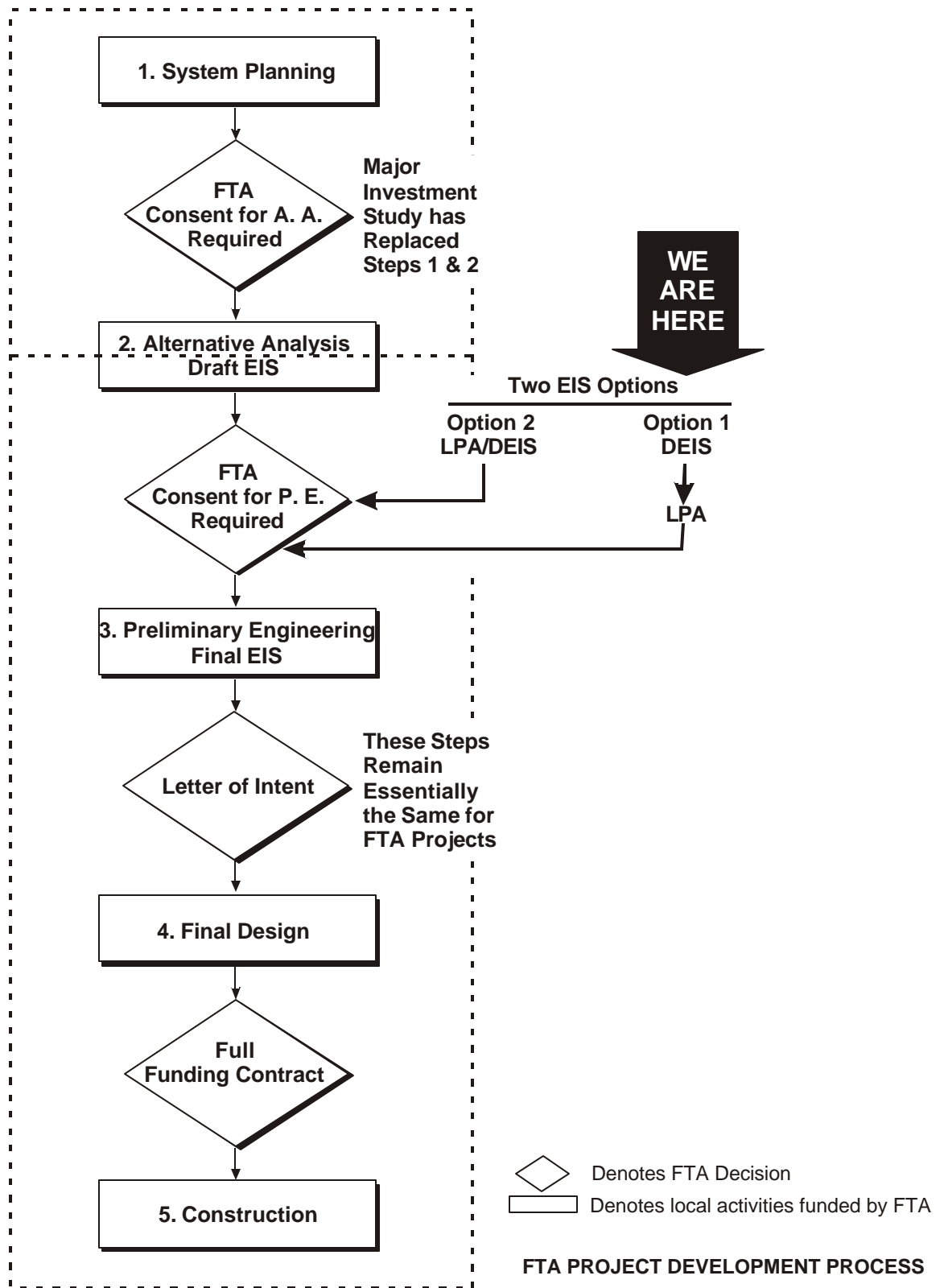
This chapter discusses some of the more frequently asked questions concerning the process being followed by the MPO in carrying out the study now underway.

3.1 What is an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)?

The preparation of an EIS is a process required by the Federal Department of Transportation to assist federal agencies in evaluating applications for funding local public transportation projects. This process involves developing and analyzing the impacts of various transportation alternatives that could potentially serve the study area. Social, cultural, natural environment, and physical impacts in relation to construction of the selected project must be thoroughly addressed and mitigated as necessary. Costs, benefits and ridership projections must also be developed and evaluated in defining the locally preferred alternative.

The project includes a conceptual design, which will eventually lead to preliminary and detailed design plans and specifications from which the facility for the preferred alternative will be constructed. The process includes determination of the horizontal and vertical location of a facility (transit line, stations, parking lots, etc.) in relation to property lines, and also includes cost estimates. The EIS is actually a document published by the Federal government that complies with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

Figure 9. FTA Project Development Chart



3.2 What is a "Supplement"

The process of supplementing a DEIS was established as a mechanism by which an environmental document is kept current or updated. It is a formal method by which a project sponsor consults with the Florida Department of Transportation before proceeding with a new phase of the study. It is used to fully document compliance with Federal laws for any changes that have occurred since the adoption of the environmental document. The supplemental DEIS process should be performed if substantial time has elapsed since the circulation of an environmental document or if there is a major change in the project's concept.

3.3 What is an "Alternative"?

For this study, an alternative is defined as a group of transportation improvements, which may include a bus/rail transit line, bus/rail stations, service additions, or service modifications. An alternative may also include a choice of local alignment options, operating plans, or financing strategies. Several transportation improvements or line segments may appear in more than one alternative. The improvements proposed for each alternative are intended to provide a wide range of options to facilitate solving existing and future transportation problems within the study area.

3.4 What Alternatives Are Being Considered?

The transit alternatives that have been developed for analysis for the Miami-Miami Beach Transportation Corridor Study were previously proposed as the Miami-Miami Beach segment in the East-West Multimodal Corridor DEIS. These scoping phase alternatives are summarized below and include a No-Build (No-Project) alternative, a Baseline alternative, in addition to the LRT alternatives that were proposed during the East-West Multimodal Corridor DEIS. The Baseline alternative contains elements that constituted the Transportation System Management (TSM) alternative that was previously featured in the East-West Multimodal Corridor DEIS.

1. **No-Build (No-Project) Alternative** - includes only projects currently planned and funded.
2. **Baseline Alternative** - includes additional bus service and minor roadway improvements between the Miami Beach Convention Center and existing Metrorail stations.
3. **Options for an at-grade LRT system** - from downtown Miami to the Miami Beach Convention Center via the south side of the MacArthur Causeway, which include several potential alignment segments:
 - Terminating at Government Center station.
 - Terminating at the Overtown station.
 - Approaching the Miami Beach Convention Center via Collins Avenue.

- Approaching the Miami Beach Convention Center via Washington Avenue.
- Approaching the Miami Beach Convention Center via Alton Road.
- Serving south Miami Beach via a loop along Washington Avenue, W 17th Street, and Alton Road.
- Connections to a maintenance shop and storage yard.

As the study progresses, particularly in the scoping phase, the alternatives will be discussed and modified, as needed, to address local public concerns. The consultant team will be refining and modifying the alternatives as further details are added during the public involvement and engineering process. A screening approach will be used throughout the Miami-Miami Beach Transportation Corridor Study to determine which alternatives best meets the needs of the community.

At the completion of the reevaluation process the analysis of alternatives will be presented to the MPO for selection as the locally preferred alternative (LPA). The alternatives being considered are discussed in more detail in Section 6.

3.5 What Kinds of Things Will be Studied?

The Miami-Miami Beach Transportation Corridor Study will develop detailed plans and engineering concepts for each alternative in order to analyze any project modifications and impact changes from what was previously analyzed in the East-West Multimodal Corridor DEIS. During the Miami-Miami Beach Transportation Corridor Study, estimates of capital and operating costs will be verified, the project financial and implementation plan will be updated, transportation benefits and impacts (particularly on traffic) will be revised, projected ridership for each alternative will be modeled, station access will be defined, and impacts to the community and businesses will be reviewed. The supplement of the East-West Multimodal Corridor DEIS will examine whether any of the following projected environmental impacts have changed materially since the DEIS was submitted:

- | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| • Land Use Changes | • Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities |
| • Community Cohesion | • Wetlands |
| • Relocation Potential | • Aquatic Preserves |
| • Community Services | • Water Quality |
| • Title VI Considerations | • Outstanding Florida Waters |
| • Controversy Potential | • Wild and Scenic Rivers |
| • Utilities and Railroads | • Floodplains |
| • Section 4(f) lands | • Coastal Zone Consistency |
| • Historic Sites/Districts | • Coastal Barrier Islands |
| • Archaeological Sites | • Wildlife and Habitats |
| • Recreation Areas | • Farmlands |

- Visual and Aesthetics
- Noise
- Air
- Construction
- Navigation

It is expected that as part of the scoping process, all issues of concern to the public and relevant agencies should be made clear. Some issues, which were thought to be crucial, may become less so, and other issues, which were not anticipated, may materialize.

The evolution of the key issues to be addressed in this project is an important aspect of the on-going Public Involvement Program.

3.6 How Can the General Public Get Involved in the Decision-Making Process?

Our goal is to inform all citizens about the alternatives being proposed, and to gain their participation in the study through public meetings and written comments. On Tuesday, October 23, 2001, the MPO will host two scoping meetings at different locations within the study area. The scoping meetings will take place on the date listed in Table 2.

Table 2. Scoping Meeting Schedule

Date	Time	Location
October 23, 2001	12:00 Noon	Miami Art Museum Auditorium 101 West Flagler Miami, FL 33130
October 23, 2001	7:00 PM	Miami Beach Botanical Garden Auditorium 2000 Convention Center Drive Miami Beach 33139

The proposed alternatives will be presented for discussion, comments and reactions. Comments from the public on the scoping meeting will be accepted until **November 7th, 2001**.

Other informational meetings will be scheduled with interested individuals, elected officials, community groups, and the appropriate governmental agencies as deemed necessary. Public meetings announcements will be published in local newspapers and project notices will be mailed to all individuals on the mailing list prepared for the study area.

Any individual who wishes to be placed on the Miami-Miami Beach Transportation Corridor Study mailing list is advised to contact the individuals listed in Table 3.

3.7 How can I learn more about the study?

Call **305.573.4455**.

Through this number, you can obtain information about meetings, request comment forms, and request project mailings. Information can also be accessed on-line at any of the following sites:

- www.co.miami-dade.fl.us/transit
- www.co.miami-dade.fl.us/mpo
- www.ci.miami-beach.fl.us

Table 3. Public Involvement Program Coordinators

Name	Company	Contact Information
Ric Katz	Communikat兹	4141 NE Second Avenue, Suite 1010 Miami, FL 33137 Ph.: (305) 573-4455 <i>rkatz@communikat兹.com</i>
Carmen Morris	Carmen Morris & Associates	15074 SW 127th Court Miami, FL 33186 Ph.: (305) 278-2395 <i>cmorris@bellsouth.net</i>

4. The Scoping Process and Public Involvement

This chapter describes the scoping and public involvement process to be used in the Miami-Miami Beach Transportation Corridor DEIS. It also discusses subsequent opportunities for public participation throughout the remainder of the study.

4.1 What is “Scoping”?

Scoping is a process commonly used to encourage the active participation of the public, local community groups, and involved agencies early in the decision-making process for public transit projects. It provides the public with the opportunity to identify any issues and concerns, and to help define transportation impacts before considerable time and effort have been put into refining alternatives. The scoping process allows the public, their elected officials, and interested governmental agencies to acquire information on the study while it remains possible to help shape its course and direction.

The scoping process also identifies the alternatives to be refined during the study, the impacts to be considered, and establishes mitigation measures that will need to be implemented. Key issues related to project implementation are identified and the technical analyses and the processes proposed to address these issues are defined.

Scoping includes the active consultation and participation of the public and all interested agencies. By requesting the input of citizens, agencies, community groups, and businesses early in the process, the MPO will insure that:

- The public and agencies are involved in setting the direction of the study;
- The public and agencies understand the reevaluation process;
- All reasonable alternatives and significant impacts are known and are examined from the beginning of the process, and;
- The roles of the appropriate agencies are identified and agreed to at the beginning of the study.

4.2 How can I participate in Scoping?

Anyone who has an interest in the Miami-Miami Beach Transportation Corridor Study and the issues surrounding transportation between downtown Miami and Miami Beach is encouraged to participate in the scoping process. Comments and suggestions on any or all of the material contained in this document can be made either orally or in writing at the scoping meetings.

This *Scoping Document* is designed to provide information about the Miami-Miami Beach Transportation Corridor Study to the public, particularly to the participants in

the scoping meetings that will take place on October 23, 2001 at the locations listed in Table 2.

Written comments are encouraged from all interested parties and will be accepted by the project staff throughout the scoping period, which will conclude on November 7, 2001, fifteen (15) days after the scoping meetings have taken place.

4.3 What other involvement opportunities will I have?

The scoping meeting provides the initial opportunities for private and public involvement within the study process. Additional opportunities will be provided throughout this study at important project milestones. The MPO's public involvement program for the Miami-Miami Beach Transportation Corridor Study includes:

1. Community Meetings

- Scoping Meeting (as described above).
- Public Meetings. These meetings will be held at various locations during the assessment of social, economic, and environmental impacts. Presentations may include the design, operations, impacts, mitigation measures and cost details of the alternatives being assessed. Public input on these items will be taken into account when the detailed alternatives are finalized and the assessment is finalized.
- Public Hearing. A public hearing will be held on the Miami-Miami Beach Transportation Corridor DEIS prior to recommending a locally preferred alternative to the Miami-Dade Metropolitan Planning Organization. The public hearing will be advertised in the local newspapers and a transcript of the hearing will be prepared.

2. Citizens Advisory Committee

The Citizens Advisory Committee will be formed from a group of individuals who live or work in the study area or who have a vested interest in the development of the Miami-Miami Beach Transportation Corridor Study project. The Citizens Advisory Committee is usually comprised of area residents, employees/commuters, and business owners or employers who are interested in providing input on the project. Whenever possible, names of prospective committee members may be drawn from associations and/or groups that represent a broader constituency.

- The Citizens Advisory Committee will be initially formed by the Mayors of Miami and Miami Beach during the early days of the study and will act as advisors to the project staff.
- The formation of the Citizens Advisory Committee is currently underway and new members will be added during the scoping phase of Miami-Miami Beach Transportation Corridor Study. All interested individuals can contact the Public Involvement Plan coordinators listed in Table 3 or can submit their names at the scoping meeting on October 23, 2001.

- It is anticipated that the Citizens Advisory Committee may meet on a dozen occasions to discuss key deliverables during the nineteen (19) months that the study is expected to last. Members of the Citizens Advisory Committee will be notified a week or two in advance of the date, time, place and subject matter of the upcoming meeting so all who are interested can attend. Members of the committee will communicate with their constituents to gather opinions and share information on the project.

5. Goals and Objectives of the Study

5.1 What are the Goals and Objectives for this study?

Several goals and their associated objectives were adopted for the previous East-West Multimodal Corridor DEIS. An evaluation matrix was developed based on the criteria outlined in the goals and objectives and was used to help select alternatives for further evaluation. The proposed alternatives were ranked based on their capacity to fulfill the requirements of each goal and objective.

The goals are general statements that define what needs to be accomplished and the objectives identify the specific expressions of those desires. Criteria are indicators or measures of how well the alternative succeeds in achieving the desired goals and objectives.

Table 4 lists the set of goals and objectives that were previously developed for the East-West Multimodal Corridor DEIS. These will be discussed, and modified as necessary, at the scoping meeting.

Table 4. Goals and Objectives

Goal No.	Goals	Objectives
Goal 1	Develop a multimodal transportation system	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improve transportation system accessibility and connectivity.• Reduce the time necessary to travel to the job market around the Airport for all modes of transportation.• Improve transportation for socially, economically and physically disadvantaged groups.• Reduce dependency on automobiles.• Improve safety.• Minimize future travel delays and congestion.
Goal 2	Improve the efficiency and safety of existing highway and transit facilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Accommodate the existing and future traffic demand• Provide accessible and safe route in event of evacuation.• Provide direct connection from Miami Beach to downtown and MIA.
Goal 3	Preserve social integrity of urban communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Minimize traffic impacts on local streets within the study area.• Minimize impacts during construction.• Minimize right-of-way requirements.
Goal 4	Plan for transportation projects that enhance the quality of the environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improve air quality by reducing automobile emissions and pollutants.• Protect sensitive areas such as wildlife habitats, wetlands, historic, and cultural sites.• Reduce traffic congestion.
Goal 5	Define a sound funding base	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide equitable transportation services and benefits to all geographic areas and constituencies.• Involve the community in the decision-making process by providing opportunities for public input.• Provide for equitable sharing of the costs of transportation improvements among those who benefit from them.
Goal 6	Provide for and enhance the efficient movement of freight.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improve the people-carrying capacity of the existing roadway and transit system

6. Initial Alternatives Under Consideration

This chapter provides descriptions of the alternatives that were considered in the East-West Multimodal Corridor DEIS and those that are being reevaluated in the Miami-Miami Beach Transportation Corridor Study as well as the additional alternatives that have been identified for review at the scoping meeting. The East-West Multimodal Corridor DEIS was based on forecasts for 2020, while the design year for the FEIS will be updated in the LRTP to 2025.

Initially, the Miami-Beach Transportation Corridor Study will reevaluate the transit alternatives that were proposed for the Miami-Miami Beach segment in the East-West Multimodal Corridor DEIS. These DEIS alternatives for the Miami-Miami Beach segment of the East-West Multimodal Corridor are reflected in Figure 10.

6.1 Previously Proposed Miami-Miami Beach LRT Alternatives

During the East-West Multimodal Corridor DEIS, three LRT base alignment alternatives were analyzed for the Miami-Miami Beach segment: the Central Business District (CBD) Tunnel Option - Option 6C(10) in the East-West Multimodal Corridor DEIS, the Government Cut Option - Option 6C(12), and the Miami Beach Loop Option - Option 6C(13). The Government Cut LRT Option (6C(12)) included a tunnel connection from the Port of Miami to W 1st Street in Miami Beach. Due to the excessive cost and the dependence of the East-West transit line, this alternative has been dropped. The CBD Tunnel Option (6C(10)) and the Miami Beach Loop Option (6C(13)) are discussed herein.

6.1.1 CBD Tunnel Option

For the Miami-Miami Beach segment of this alternative, the alignment enters a tunnel after the Orange Bowl at NW 12th Avenue and NW 7th Street (refer to Figure 1), passes under the Miami River, Bayfront Park and the Intracoastal Waterway, and resurfaces at the Port of Miami. The base alignment for the Miami-Miami Beach at-grade LRT system as shown in Figure 10, begins at Flagler Street on Biscayne Boulevard and follows the median of Biscayne Boulevard to the MacArthur Causeway. The LRT base alignment line continues along the south side of the Causeway to Miami Beach where it turns south to W 1st Street, then north to Washington Avenue to the Miami Beach Convention Center at W 20th Street. An alternative to Washington Avenue along Collins Avenue was also analyzed.

6.1.2 Miami Beach Loop Option

This Miami Beach Loop Option features a similar base alignment in the downtown Miami area and across the MacArthur Causeway. The difference in the alignment stems from the Miami Beach loop component (Figure 10), which follows W 1st Street, Washington Avenue, W 17th Street, and Alton Road.

6.2 No-Build (No-Project) Alternative

The No-Project Alternative for the Miami-Miami Beach Transportation Corridor Study includes the existing highway, transit facilities and services, and those transit and highway improvements planned and programmed to be implemented by 2020. This alternative provides the baseline for establishing the environmental impacts of the project, and assumes the following projects will be completed:

- Extension of the Stage 1 Metrorail Line to a new station just west of the Palmetto Expressway;
- A new park and ride facility at that location;
- Access ramps to and from the north on the Palmetto Expressway; and
- Increase in Tri-Rail frequencies to 20-minute headways during peak periods between MIA and Mangonia Park Station in West Palm Beach.
- Construction of the MIC and the MIC/MIA Connector

6.3 Baseline Alternative

The Baseline Alternative proposed for the Miami-Miami Beach Transportation Corridor Study was designated in the East-West Multimodal Corridor DEIS as the Transportation System Management (TSM) Alternative. The Baseline alternative features low cost, operationally oriented improvements to address those transportation problems that have been identified in the corridor. This alternative will provide a “baseline” against which all of the “Build” alternatives are evaluated. The Baseline alternative also includes all improvements identified under the No-Project alternative.

6.4 Miami-Miami Beach Transportation Corridor Alternatives

These initial alternatives under consideration for the Miami-Miami Beach Transportation Corridor Study primarily follows the LRT base alignment alternative that was previously proposed for the Miami-Miami Beach segment of the East-West Multimodal Corridor. Modifications in the CBD area of this base alignment features alternative connections to Metrorail, Metromover and a yard and shop site. In addition, the tunnel option to the Port of Miami, proposed in the East-West Multimodal Corridor DEIS is not under consideration in this alternative. The proposed modifications to the base alignment form the basis of the Miami-Miami Beach Transportation Corridor as shown in Figure 11.

6.5 Vehicle Technologies

The study will consider urban buses advanced design, and light rail transit vehicles. The East-West Multimodal Corridor DEIS recommended LRT technology for the alignment.

6.5.1 Local/Priority Bus Service

The current Metrobus fleet includes five hundred and eighty (580) 40-foot and 60-foot buses, 45 minibuses, and seventeen (17) vans. Peak-period vehicle requirements are four hundred and eighty (480) 40-foot and 60-foot buses

Figure 10. East-West Multimodal Corridor DEIS Alternatives

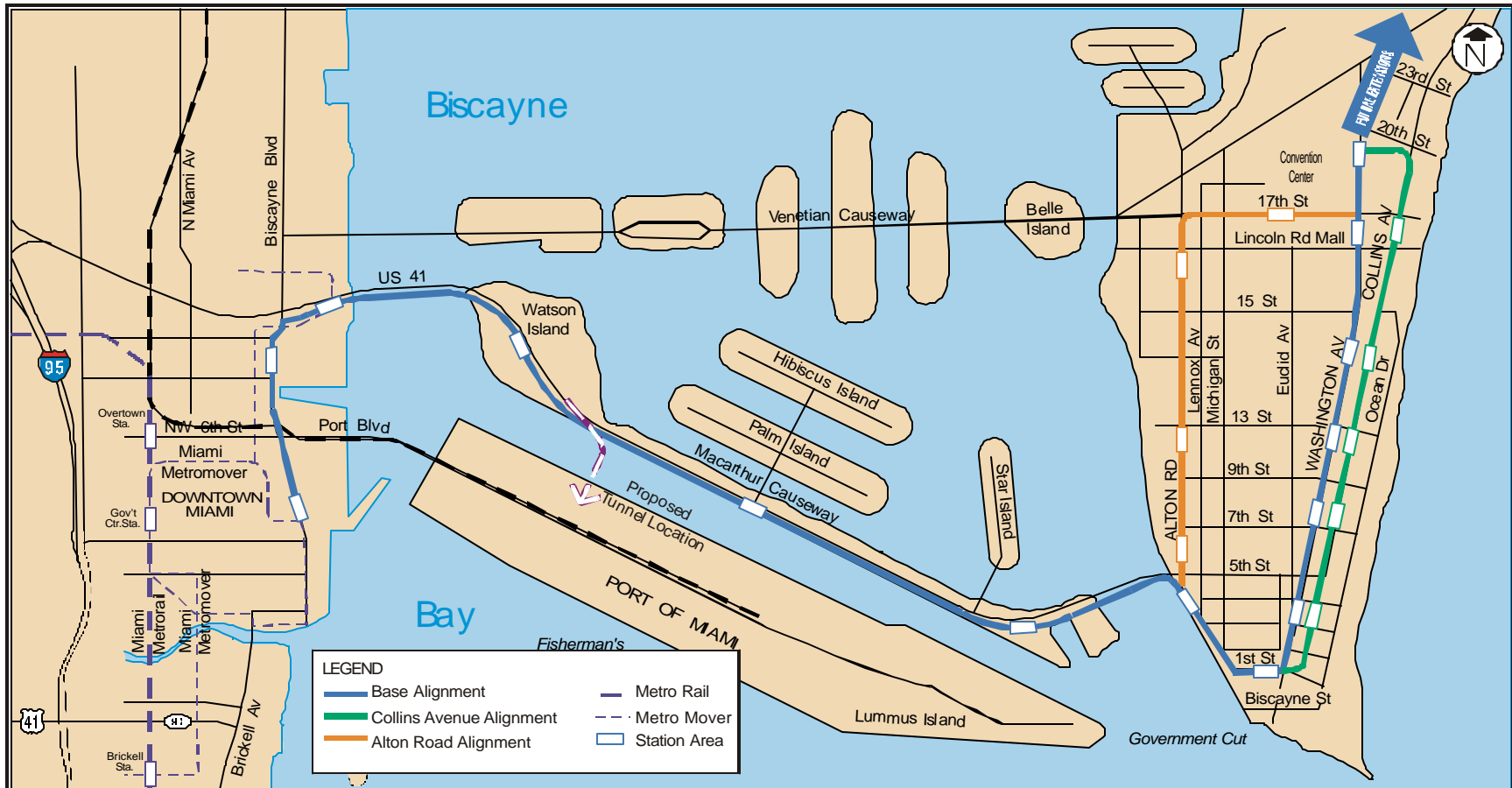
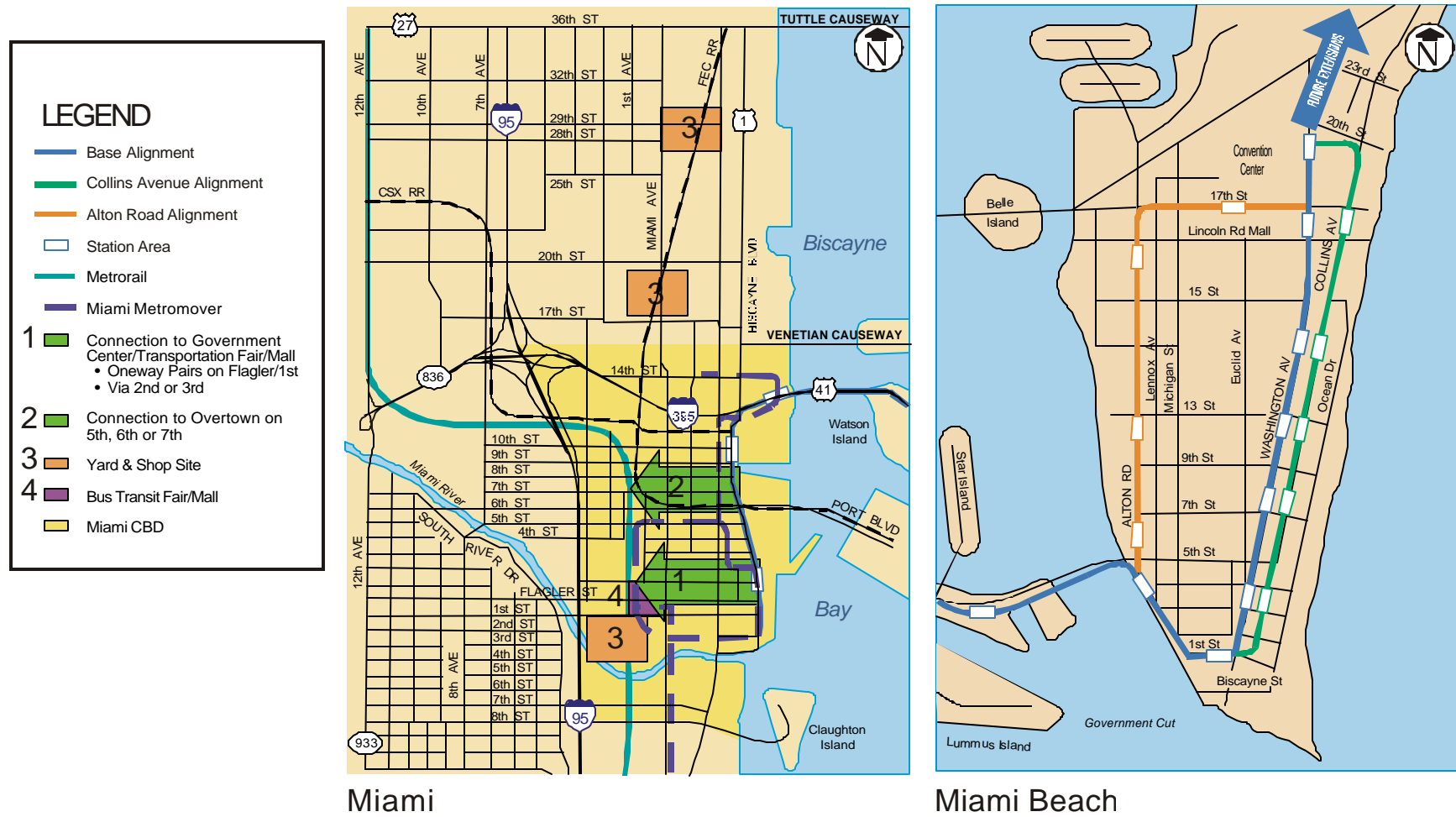


Figure 11. Miami - Miami Beach Transportation Corridor Study Initial Alternatives



and forty-three (43) minibuses/vans. Seventy-five (75) bus routes serve all of Miami-Dade County, in addition to special park-ride events and lifeline services. The average weekday boardings for Metrobus during the 1999 fiscal year were 205,900 boardings. Traditional bus operations feature the following:

- Serves medium passenger volumes
- Typically 50 to 60 seated passengers per vehicle
- Numerous vehicle suppliers
- Mature technology
- High vehicle maintenance and road maintenance costs
- Relatively high operating costs

The buses for the Miami-Miami Beach service would be advanced design and combine the features of local and bus rapid transit services as reflected in Figure 12. Special facilities can be created for bus operations through the development of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), which has the following characteristics:

- Can operate at high speed - up to 65 mph, can avoid roadway congestion by use of exclusive lanes
- Primarily serves long distance commuter trips
- No stops for a major portion of trip, with infrequent stops at termini only
- Buses may continue on a local collector route to provide a one-seat ride without transfers
- May operate in HOV lanes with other traffic or on exclusive lanes
- May require additional rights-of-way for new park-and-ride lots, transfer and lane expansions
- Low vehicle cost, but medium to high cost for ramps and HOV, or exclusive lanes, or transitway
- A medium step between bus operations and LRT is the concept called trams on tires. This is electric buses operating on a regular street like surface with power supplied from overhead
- Serves medium to high passenger volumes
- Runs on rubber tires
- Utilizes compressed natural gas (CNG) or electric power from overhead catenary
- Double articulation; can transverse 40-foot curves
- 100 percent low floor
- Integrates into urban environment; moderately supportive of Land Use Plans
- Does not require street demolition to move utilities or place rails

- Medium initial and annual cost

Figure 12. Advanced Bus



6.5.2 Light Rail Transit (LRT)

A number of transit technologies are operational within South Florida: the Metrorail heavy rail system, the Tri-Rail commuter rail system, and the Metromover automated people mover system. Light rail operations within the Miami-Miami Beach Transportation Corridor would introduce LRT to the region. The LRT technology (Figure 13) exhibits the following operating characteristics.

- Serves medium (light) to high passenger volume
- Up to 170 passengers per vehicle, 680 passengers in 4-car train
- Low to medium speed (depending on degree of separation of right-of-way and distance between stops) 55 to 65 mph
- May serve short to long distance trips
- Stations spaced 0.5 to 1.0 miles apart
- Normally uses overhead power collection
- May operate in traffic, with cross-traffic, or on exclusive right-of-way
- Can negotiate steep grades and small radius curves
- Stations may be elaborate or simple. May use low platforms and/or high platforms
- Vehicles may operate alone or in trains of up to four vehicles
- Numerous vehicle suppliers
- Overhead catenary system requires high vertical clearances
- Moderately high capital cost (more than commuter rail and less than heavy rail)
- Integrates well into urban environment
- Very supportive of Land Use Plans

Figure 13. Advanced Light Rail Transit



7. The Next Step

Upon completion of the scoping process, work will move forward on the Miami-Miami Beach Transportation Corridor Study. It is currently anticipated that the Miami-Miami Beach Transportation Corridor DEIS will be circulated in May 2002. The public hearing on the Miami-Miami Beach Transportation Corridor DEIS is anticipated to be held in June 2002. Once the public hearing is completed and the comment period expires, comments will be reviewed and addressed, and a locally preferred alternative (LPA) will be recommended to MPO. The MPO's committees could select the LPA in July 2002.